

Industry and housing

CAP Reform

On the basis that we needed to know the current state of core industries, the Industry sub group set itself the task of producing a Farming and Fishing Position Statement. This proved to be a considerable and very revealing task.

With the CAP reform looming the research rapidly developed into a “What is the likely effect on Westray?” exercise. Because of the deadline imposed by the CAP reform consultation period, the fishing side had to be temporarily put to one side but we will return to it soon.

That Westray is a clearly defined area, that is well farmed, very well documented and a size that allows a good degree of local knowledge, proved to be invaluable for calculating current, and possible future, stock numbers and the financial effects of the proposed changes.

The sub group worked closely with the Westray branch of the NFU to ensure accurate data.

The NFU took its concerns over the predictions and their implications for the whole Westray economy to both the Community Council and Development Trust, who decided to go public.

The document detailing the current and possible future position was used by Orkney NFU and Stephen Hagan in their meeting with Ross Finnie and Jim Wallace, and evidently proved an eye opener for both parties.

Nest Units.

The nest units are a great asset to Westray. They cost us nothing and they do offer ready made and serviced starter units for folk to get going without the capital cost of purchase or new build. The difficulty of finding tenants for these has shown how hard it is to start a new business in Westray, or any of the outer isles. We very much welcome Graham and Kathy Maben who are basing Westraak in one of the units. It will also become a Tourist Information Point.

There is a surge of interest in Westray and much building work going on, that is very welcome, but housing is often a delicate issue. While house prices were very low, our young couples were very fortunate in being able to buy themselves a place and be independent. Now we have house prices rising all across Orkney and it is threatening to become more difficult for them.

Westray offers much and there are often people coming here looking for sites to build on or property to buy. When they travel round the island and see empty/derelict property, it is not always easy for them to realise that the owners have no thought of selling because it may be family land or promised for their own

It is also not always easy for a farmer to contemplate selling a house or site to a non-farming incomer who would then be in the middle of their farmland but without the knowledge of how

Housing.



Reports by
Geordie Drever

Treasurers Report

This year saw our treasurer, Shirley Haunschmidt, leave and me, Janette Rendall, take over in May 2003.

In July the Trust became the employer of our Local Development Officer, Sam Harcus. Funding for this post came from Orkney Enterprise, Orkney Islands Council, Crofters Commission and Communities Scotland. This funding is available until June 20 04.

July also saw the end of funding from the Initiative-at-the Edge for forwarding the Trust's Development Plan. This fund also paid for some feasibility studies, running costs, clerk's wages, as well as for revising and rewriting the plan.

This means that the Trust needs to find alternative funding for its running costs. The Community Council Grant Scheme allocated £500 to the Trust to be used on administration and running costs for 1 year. We also received a donation of £1000 from the Community Association.

The Höfn still has money for running costs available until October from Children in Need. It also has remaining equipment funds. Funding is secured from the Rural Communities Transport Initiative and the Westray Community Council for the Höfn bus until 2005.

Our Youth Development Worker, Lorna Brown, is funded until August 2004. Work is ongoing to secure future funding for Lorna's post as well as the Local Development Officer's post.

We also received funding from Awards for All for an archaeological survey.

In the past year the Trust has received funding from Orkney Islands Council, Orkney Enterprise, Westray Community Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Social Inclusion Partnership Fund, Rural Communities Transport Initiative, Awards for All, BBC Children in Need, Westray Community Association, Scottish Natural Heritage, Crofters Commission, Communities Scotland and from the hire of the Höfn.

Janette Rendall

Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP)

Our time as a mainstream SIP area has now come to an end but we hope to still have some involvement. SIP monies have been exclusively for the benefit of 14 -25 year olds and have been a huge asset to Westray. The bulk of last year's resources went into the Isles Youth Development Project, which along with Council funding has provided three part-time posts in the North Isles, including Lorna Brown (covering Westray and Papay). We are very keen to see this project continued and are hopeful that it will be for some time yet.

Over the past year we have also been able to support a number of people with vocational training grants, give backing to the "Westray View", part fund two summer student placements, and provide a range of youth work grants bringing new equipment and new experiences to the Isle.

We remain very grateful to Community Education Team Leader, Malcolm Graves, for his continued support and guidance.

Iain MacDonald.